

III. CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM (MHS) NATIONAL QUALITY MONITORING CONTRACTOR (NQMC)

The NQMC is required to conduct one (1) review to validate the appropriateness of the contractor's utilization review decisions as described in [Section I.](#) of this chapter, and to conduct second level reconsiderations in accordance with [OPM Part Three, Chapter 7, Section IV.C.](#), and [Chapter 199.15](#). The contractor shall submit a detailed plan for interacting with the NQMC for these activities. Any revisions shall be submitted annually through the Lead Agent to the Contracting Officer for approval. The contractor shall submit the plan to the Lead Agents ninety (90) calendar days prior to the beginning of each option period. The plan shall include:

A. A description of the processes and procedures for the implementation and operation of the contractor's requirement to provide the NQMC with medical records and all documentation required to enable the NQMC to perform validation review, second-level reconsiderations and focused reviews;

B. A description of the processes and procedures for notifying the appealing parties, in writing, of the results of all NQMC second level reconsideration reviews and any further appeal rights in accordance with [OPM Part Three, Chapter 7, Section IV.](#)

C. A description of the processes, procedures, and format for providing the results of all NQMC second level reconsideration review results to the appropriate Lead Agent and the Contracting Officer on a quarterly basis;

D. An acknowledgment that all second level reconsideration decisions by the NQMC are binding upon the contractor and providers;

E. A description of the processes and procedures for ensuring that all medical records required in [Section II.A.5.](#) and [Section II.B.](#) of this chapter are provided within the time limits specified;

F. A description of the processes and procedures for corrective action when decisions by the NQMC involving retrospective reviews (i.e. post payment reviews or reviews of contractor denials not appealed) conflict with the contractor's decision;

G. A detailed description of the procedures for protecting the confidentiality of information in accordance with the requirements in [Section I.G.](#) of this chapter.

H. NQMC validation reviews performed on a sample of cases selected monthly based upon criteria established each month by the Contracting Officer for the NQMC. The NQMC will review five percent (5%) (see [Section II.A.5.](#) of this chapter) of medical records each option period. (For mental health reviews, the Government estimates one hundred (100) cases per month will be reviewed.) The NQMC will perform its reviews based on the same information and documentation on which the contractor's decision was made, including the review criteria applied. The NQMC validation review will be limited to the issues of medical necessity, appropriateness of care, level of care, reasonableness of care, and intensity of services.

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1. The contractor shall provide the NQMC with hardcopies of the medical record and all case documentation, including the utilization review decision and rationale for that decision, for each case requested by the NQMC for review within forty-five (45) days from the date the contractor received the case selection notification.

2. The contractor shall review those cases in which the NQMC decision conflicts with the contractor's decision. The contractor shall, within thirty (30) calendar days, provide to the Contracting Officer a written response to the discrepancies stating whether the contractor agrees, partially agrees, or does not agree with each NQMC finding. Where the contractor does not agree, partially or totally, the contractor shall provide specific rationale for the disagreement. Unless directed by the Contracting Officer, the contractor shall not take any further action on specific cases addressed as part of the validation reviews. The Government estimates about thirty percent (30%) of the cases sampled each month will require contractor review.